

ECONOMICAL, ECO-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

Sustainable Solutions that Will Help You Save More than You Spend

Oakville, Ontario... Green consumers are no longer a niche group; today, they're everyday individuals who are willing to go the extra mile to save the planet – provided they receive a bit of return on their investment. Information gathered from the Home Improvement Research Institute and analyzed by Jack Suvak, Moen Incorporated's senior director, research and insights, shows that today's consumers want green products that are convenient, cost-effective and don't sacrifice performance.

The recent recession hasn't stalled the green movement, rather it has morphed it into a new environmental pragmatism that embraces restraint, simplicity and cost-savings. This new sustainable ideal isn't hard to adopt; in fact, the resources are affordable and almost endless. From water- and energy-saving products to local steals and deals, going green has become easier and more cost-effective than ever before.

Reduce, Reuse, Freecycle

How can we put less strain on our natural resources? When you purchase a new item, from furniture to clothing, that item utilized some type of new resources to make. By choosing second-hand items...from that vintage designer dress to the charming antique armoire, you are keeping existing natural resources safely in the ground and products that still may have a long life ahead out of landfills. Celebrities and style icons, from French designer Christian Louboutin to popular television actress Courteney Cox have proudly displayed unique vintage pieces in their homes during recent photo spreads, removing the stigma that's sometimes associated with second-hand.

Besides for-profit furniture and clothing shops, non-profit organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society and The Salvation Army also run stores that sell donated products to benefit a worthwhile cause.

No time to go shopping? Bring great finds directly to your computer screen. Start by visiting craigslist.org, which features free online classified ads for sale items, or Freecycle.org, a nonprofit movement of individuals working to reduce waste by giving away unwanted items. Many local communities also publicize on-site or online sales for those looking to give away or sell gently used goods.

Resource Reduction

When modern convenience is a must-have, it's okay to buy new – especially if it helps to conserve resources. Perhaps you have taken small steps toward having a more sustainable home by doing things like remembering to turn off the lights when you leave a room; setting the sleep timer on the TV; or limiting time spent in the shower... but there are products that can accomplish these tasks for you, making it that much easier to do your part for the environment.

One easy and inexpensive way to promote conservation is by upgrading bath products to water-saving models. Many water-conserving bath products are available for the same price – and with the same functionality – as full-flow models. Moen offers water-saving showerheads in both standard and handheld options, including its new Single-function, Eco-Performance hand shower, which provides a clean, transitional design and choice of an adjustable wall bracket or 24-inch slide bar, for optimal flexibility. Best of all, its flow rate is up to 30 percent less than the industry standard for showerheads – without a noticeable difference in experience.

If you won't go to a water-saving showerhead because you don't think you can forego your luxurious rainshower experience, think again. Moen also offers Eco-Performance rainshowers, like its eight-inch Flat Rainshower, which provides full-body coverage with invigorating water sprays – at a flow rate of 20 percent less than the industry standard for showerheads.

In addition to showerheads, faucets provide another great way to save water *and* money. Select manufacturers – like Moen – have converted all residential lavatory faucets to water-saving models, so you can use less water while brushing your teeth or washing your face. To calculate your approximate water savings by using these types of sustainable products, check out the water savings calculator on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s WaterSense® program website: www.epa.gov/watersense.

Modern appliances are another way to achieve significant energy savings. Today, everything from refrigerators to heating systems are made to be so energy efficient that you'll often recoup the expense of purchasing the appliance in saved energy costs within a matter of a few years. The EPA's ENERGY STAR® program provides a useful Save Energy @ Home Tool that tells you, room by room, how much energy you waste per year by using old, inefficient products in the home.

Multi-Tasking Magic

Beyond new and used products, look for items that take the place of two or more products in the home, utilizing less resources to make and saving money through fewer appliance purchases. The Vitamix® 5200 is the ultimate multi-tasker, doing the work of not only a blender, but also completing tasks like cooking soup, kneading dough, grinding grains and even make ice cream for dessert. Similarly, two-in-one toaster and convection oven appliances eliminate the need to purchase both of these items separately, and conserve resources, by using less power than a full-size oven to heat small meals or snacks.

Speaking of multi-taskers, there are likely some items in your cupboard that can stand in for cleaning products, making these the ultimate two-in-one solution. Baking soda is an excellent cleanser, deodorizer and water softener; cornstarch can be used for everything from window washing to carpet cleaning; and lemon is an effective natural anti-bacterial agent.

Having a green home doesn't need to involve spending more money – it's about simple solutions and behavioural shifts that will produce a long-term return-on-investment for you...and the environment.

For more information about Moen products, visit www.moen.ca.